

Conflict of low threshold- an emerging area

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“You may not be interested in war...but war is interested in you”.

Leon Trotsky:

Transformation of War Introduction

As we see today the security of the world is under huge threat and due to reluctant and non-cooperative attitude of few countries now keeping peace in the world has become a highly challenging task. The scenario where there is no control on production of arms, where many countries are loaded with disasters weapons including nuclear weapon, where machine and money has more significant than human life in such an era entertaining a new kind of problem or conflict is a like curse in disguise.

The word low threshold situation is a now frequently appeared word in present era. Low threshold situation is a new phenomenon. It is a new pattern of war. One can understand it by considering it as a war between the Hot & Cold War.

Generally we find such kind of conflict only in the area where a group of people are have unsatisfied attitude with the State. Hence it can also be termed as war between a state and sub state actors. This is war by a group who intends to gain independence by separating a part of land from State. Thus it can be seen as the conflict arising due to greed of power, where few political people misguide the mass to gain power by violence.

A war between two States can also be covered under this domain for example State P supports a group of people of State I in order to overthrow the present governing authority of out of power.

In general sense low threshold situation can also be used as general term of terrorism, racial violence, communal issues, guerrilla wars etc but is an ambiguous concept that actually includes armed violence and not nuclear or bigger persistent wars.

Reasons of such conflicts

Low threshold conflict is an active and violent action of a group of people with state as opposite party or amongst themselves for some specific demands.

Generally it involves the struggle of ideologies, administration, basic need etc.

This conflict involves various motives such as economic welfare, employment necessities, political environment, religious establishments, gender justice etc. It is not global or universal in nature rather it is local in nature but it involves or effects the world at large.

The low threshold situation can also be understood by its consequences. Every act has its pros & Cons and so is low threshold conflict. Its impact speaks of its gravity and intensity. The low threshold conflict changes the poverty statistics, it increase instability, it raises dissatisfaction, disconnect, gender exploitation & various other areas as well. And such changes effects the society in a real bad manner. It creates a huge stress and ultimately generate high discontent amongst people.

When the inhabitant of a demographic zone sense that they are not addressed well and there needs are ignored high time, they feel they are kept away from the basic amenities and utter disparity and injustice is happening around. As a result such disconnected group many a times get together and join hands to achieve such social economic, political justice through violent means. The extent of their dissatisfaction and sense of injustice is the one which normally decides the gravity which they will involve in violence. The results and achievements received as a result of such violence may or may not be instable but not all results are wrong.

Various revolutions of the world is on one or other way is a consequence of such wars only. The freedom struggle of India also started with an uprising which took place among a group of people but that has sparked the fire of freedom.

The above discussions draws a conclusion that low intensity conflict is a worldwide phenomenon. And is not a new concept at all. Entire world is witnessing causalities due to such violent situations. Reasons can be anything but its existence neither can be denied not it can be overcome easily. Following discussions will deal with the essentials of low intensity conflicts.

Essentials

Generally conflict is an action which has demonstration of power done to provoke or induce the opposite party to make him agree on once will. It's a fight of ideology between two parties generally both of them are from political fraternity. And among them one of the party is in power and another is the one who is hoping for or planning to get power. Generally such conflict aimed for governance.

In another words war is phenomenon which determines the real status of a society and what is going on in a given territory i.e. who is in power, who is claiming for power, who is eligible and who is not, it reveals the depth of ideologies, it also manifests the wealth of a state. It reveals the real status of Law and order of the State etc.

Here war is no more fought in a conventional method as today the nature of war has changed it is more of intra-state than inter-state. And last few decades witness this new kind of war only. In today's world the conflict is no more mere demonstration of power and suppression it's rather happening due to failure of state machinery. Now state is expected to maintain spirit of equality and provide justice to all without any kind of discrimination and in its place the state does injustice and unsatisfactory actions. And such ruthless and selfish act of state

raises disturbance in masses and this comes as a root cause of such low scale conflicts. Low threshold conflict is more religious in nature. Here civilians are targeted for major atrocities are committed on civilians. The reason behind such kind of conflict is failure of state machinery. And one of the major problem of low intensity conflict is that due to failure of state machinery it is difficult to make distinction between the combatants of public and private nature, neither the difference can be made between combatant and civilians.

Following is the essentials features of LIC which makes it different than other war or war like situations.

Restricted Army

In general war the political intervention is very low in term of military matters. Generally army is free to act on its own once it is given the order or discretion of war and thus they act and behave as per the priority of their officials and they follow their own rules & procedures. But when it comes to low intensity conflict we find that in a restricted area security forces are deployed with big political influence and interference over army. Thus their action in low intensity zone may create ill effect. Thus autonomy of a military and any security forces is reduced at a low intensity zone. Here the targets is not to get victorious over an enemy since the party is your own civil society people whom state doesn't want to kill but want to restrict in order to control their movements. The movement of armed forces in low intensity conflicts is highly restricted. Here preventive measures is not taken generally rather they have to wait for the crime to take place before any action. The outcome of this kind of operation is not detrimental to military but political superior thus it demoralize the soldiers and it frustrate them at peak.

Low in intensity by all means

The second characteristics of low intensity conflicts is that it is very small in operation whether in terms of number of persons involved in operation, whether whatever is the volume of casualties occurred, whether the extent of weapon used, whether the amount of loss involved everything in low intensity conflict is very restricted. This is the reason why the conflict of such low threshold are generally categorized as merely of police activity or police operations. Its extent generally depends upon the duration it last for.

Converted Public

In low threshold situation, commonly the operation takes place not by any outside force or Military but by the general public who were civilian earlier and now they turn into militant, Guerrillas, terrorist etc. And because of this characteristic to deal with them is really difficult as identifying them becomes challenge. It is essential to have information and co-ordination of police if at all army is involved in an operation of this kind. To control the tension of such nature it is really important the police the localities and military personnel have good relationship with each other.

Common Psychological factor

The groups who rebel against Govt. of any place have the common understanding and that is 'the authority in power is unworthy and cruel'. They have unified opinion that the person in power has no willingness to understand the cry of common people. Such groups have common understanding that this group is not addressed well and is far from development. Rebellions feel inferior and disadvantageous and this left alone feeling drag them to rebel against authority and against the system. However, most of the time it is correct therefore it is good for the government to refrain from such activities which can create such psychological view of the masses. Sometimes it's a war not of weapons but of ideologies, and if so, then generally it fought and won without any violent means. But if otherwise then the violent situations arises. Thus, the scale of battle depends upon nature of un-satisfaction.

Nature of Tactics

Another very important characteristics of the low intensity conflicts is the tactics which is being opted to tackle the situation. In war of usual nature it is head on collision which takes place but in low intensity conflicts the tactics is very irregular and unusual. Assassination, hostages, kidnapping guerrilla attacks, abuses, demolitions, riots etc. are the common means to reach on end. Thus, it is difficult to handle because it is tough for the authority to presume and prepare the means which may be used by rebellions and violent groups to achieve the end they have planned for. Something which is required most from the authority's side is the patience, as this kind of battle generally goes on for longer period mostly decades. Since the ultimate goal of the rebellions is to bring the power down till negotiations of their demands thus they don't prefer head on collision as a proper method and rather they prefers to continue the struggle for longer time.

If we consider and analyze the low intensity conflicts very closely we find that it is becoming methods for the groups of rebels now and without clear political object it is impossible to eradicate this kind of situation and if Government is wiling not to have such groups they must be willing to work on ground level and they must address un-privileged and disadvantageous group properly only political will and appropriate policies such problems can be avoided or this new type of wars is very much prepared to end world peace and prosperity.

State Failure

Concept of failure of state machinery enumerates the actual stage of state. It indicates that state is not strong enough to hold its citizens. It describes the political unsteadiness, it indicates the loss of control over its civilian

and land. It questions the administrative capacity of the state. It determines how repressive policy the state has for its functioning.

Fragile state reflects the situations where there is a political crises in state. Generally it covers broader aspects of civil conflicts and huge human rights violations which is particularly connected with the state breakdown.

The situation of fragile state doesn't arise in a single day or in just one go but it is a gradual process and the state who is subject to it is generally broken, deteriorating, futile, distorted.

India and low threshold situation

India has seen low intensity conflicts from an ancient times and in fact Indian history is history of wars & struggle of depressed and deprived groups etc. From the very beginning India is very rich by all means, such as culture, wealth, rich demographic feature etc. and it's prosperity lead to several invasions and wars from external as well as internal powers for dominion over its heritage and mirage.

It is a nation which is being robbed by numerous foreigners and is drained as due to their illegal invasion into it. Whether due to act of British people or of Mughal or present day politician it has a history of distress and tears. India is known as a home to maximum internal conflicts. It's also flooded with the history of religious conflicts for religion has a predominance over India. The internal conflicts of India includes – freedom fight from 1857 until 1947 and later on separatist insurgencies ever since 1947. Around 30 armed insurgencies took place till then, leaving behind number of hostility of people who failed to attend their grievances and who faced acute human right violations. The record shows as it has over two hundred (200) armed irregular guerrillas groups and among this date 68 are major groups. In state of Manipur alone around 34 armed groups are active.

Such groups in India are homegrown agencies and it is slowly capturing whole nation's peace and security. Currently when we look into it, we find among all, few conflicts are one which needs special mention since it has become a long lasting battle for power and wealth and most of them are fruit of political disparity and mismanagement. The demand for supply of basic needs such a food health shelter etc. has resulted into conversion of the civilian into combatant and rebellions groups.

At present three major areas of conflict in India are Jammu and Kashmir, Northern States and Central & Eastern parts which is hub of most rebellions operation. A very huge number of people are fighting as an organized groups for various reasons, this includes their demand for independence, demand of integrate with other nations or demand of equality and protection etc. In various reports it is estimated that since 1989 between 47000 to 77000 people have been victimized in Kashmir conflict alone. And North Eastern groups – specifically Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Mizoram have experience more than 40000 death since 1979 and

data says that the Moist operation at Central and Eastern have witnessed more than 6000 deaths¹. We believe the reality might have been more grave than the reported once. And despite such situation, India has for unknown reasons, refrains from declaring this all this regions as conflict zones and because of this the protection available under International convention also cannot be availed. Thus the challenges and the problems faced by the civilians during these times remains unexplainable and incurable and unaddressed due to lack of recognition.

Conclusion

The low intensity conflict had one or other way created dangerous situation for democratic values. All what is expected from the Govt. is to give high place to the democratic spirit and to formulate a rule in such way that this democratic value is alive. If it is not done then the legitimacy of such value will be in danger. Thus to achieve the goal of dismantment of rebel & get a political solution it's important that international organization such as U.N. Security Council plays an unbound role if the local governing authorities fail to do that.

Furthermore when we look at the world at present day we find that dissatisfaction is rising, terrorism is rising, insecurity among civilian is at peak, economic imperialisms is at its doorstep for many nations. The political will and democratic values are diminishing and this creates an apprehension of more psychological disturbance and dissatisfaction among masses and if continues then world will witness such conflicts in a grave way and no power will be able to address it since it is highly irregular and unsystematic types of battle.

Henceforth, it is required from the Government to wisely formulate the policies and minimize military role in handling local disputes. One other perspectives which is to be kept in mind that not to give political face to every issue and every demand of general public.

It is also important to acknowledge that the origin of low threshold situation is nothing but from a political conflict and this conflict varies from place to place & nation to nation but another important aspect which is important to keep in mind is no preparation and no uniform training of forces can help any nation to tackle it rather the best way is to address it at beginning so that such problem doesn't get a boom.

Well it can't be denied that low intensity conflict if is not addressed well may cause serious damage to any nation (such as ISIS, LTTE conflicts etc.) It can not only destroy peace and order but even cause infrastructural loss and can cause destruction of wealth, death of civilian in large scale is other consequences of LIC.

¹Ranvijay violent conflict in India: Issue of continuation, Jan 2010